

Raymond Planning Board Minutes
September 23, 2010

Approved 10/07/2010

Place: Raymond High School; Media Center
Call to Order: 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Jonathan Wood, Chairman; Carolyn Matthews, Vice Chairman; Bill Hoitt, Board of Selectmen Ex-officio; Bill Cantwell; Gretchen Gott; Jim Kent; Don Hedman, Alternate.

Staff Present: Ernest Cartier Creveling, Community Development Director; Robert Price, Planning Technician.

Pledge of Allegiance

Alternate Don Hedman was seated in place of Doug Vogel for the duration of the meeting.

Work Session – Meeting with Abutting Towns

Members Sitting for this Discussion: Jonathan Wood; Carolyn Matthews; Bill Hoitt; Bill Cantwell; Jim Kent; Gretchen Gott; Don Hedman.

Earlier in the year, the Raymond Planning Board decided to extend an invitation to the Planning Boards of the six communities abutting Raymond, in an effort to improve communication and outreach between towns, and to offer a forum for Boards to discuss issues of regional significance. Those attending this meeting were:

Judith Lindsey, Member, Candia Planning Board
Mike Morosco, Vice Chairman, Epping Planning Board
Jack Downing, Member, Fremont Planning Board
Meredith Bolduc, Land Use Administrator, Town of Fremont
Jack Munn, Southern NH Planning Commission (SNHPC)

Mr. Wood stated he would like to discuss issues with Regional Impact, Planning Commissions and Current Projects facing each Town. He led the meeting with the topic of Regional Impact.

Regional Impact Discussion

Mr. Wood asked what other Towns do when reviewing a project to determine if it could have regional impact. Mr. Morosco of Epping asked Mr. Munn of SNHPC to give an overview of regional impact, and how to go about making such a determination. Mr. Munn reviewed the Regional Impact Statute (RSA 36:55) and the criteria Boards must consider when making a regional impact determination. Mr. Munn also outlined how SNHPC addressed the regional impact issue in the past with their member communities by creating a guide document. He also outlined the Planning Commission's role in reviewing projects that have been declared as having regional impact.

Ms. Lindsey of Candia stated in Candia, they do not undertake a regional impact review on every project; only on those that have the perception of regional impact.

Ms. Bolduc of Fremont stated Fremont has never had a proposal that would meet the regional impact criteria in the Statute.

Mr. Morosco of Epping stated Epping does conduct a regional impact review for every project, but added it is important not to go overboard and end up overburdening applicants by declaring a project

has regional impact when it truly doesn't. Mr. Wood asked about the recent Market Basket development located off Exit 7 from Route 101. Mr. Morosco replied it was not declared as a regional impact because Routes 101 and 125 were both long established, there were Department of Transportation plans in place for the area, and the water resources in the area come from the Town.

Mr. Wood explained that Raymond has, over the past year, declared a couple of small subdivisions as having regional impact because of their proximity to the Epping and Candia/Deerfield Town Lines, respectively. He added that the two most common triggers for regional impact in Raymond have been proximity to a Town Line and proximity to the Lamprey River. Mr. Wood also added that Raymond tends to take a broader approach in that it is safer to declare something as having regional impact, so abutting communities can be made aware, and they can decide for themselves if the project poses any concerns.

Ms. Gott stated development in Epping is starting to cause traffic patterns to change through the Town. She asked if this issue has been discussed. Mr. Morosco of Epping replied numerous traffic impact studies have been conducted, and public input has been requested all along. Ms. Gott followed by asking how the Epping Planning Board reviews traffic on the Town as a whole, rather than in a specific area, as a result of a development proposal. Ms. Gott further clarified that she feels development is causing traffic to shift into residential areas, and asked if the Epping Planning Board considers the impact of this situation when reviewing applications. Mr. Morosco replied they try to have joint Board meetings with the Board of Selectmen, and also with the Town's Public Works Department. He noted Epping has also worked with the Department of Transportation in an effort to synchronize the traffic lights along the Route 125 corridor to improve traffic flow. He also clarified that legal notices regarding public hearings are sent to abutters, but few attend meetings.

Ms. Matthews asked Mr. Munn of SNHPC to speak about the cost to developers if a regional impact declaration is made. Mr. Munn noted there is no statutory provision that gives Planning Commissions funding to review development proposals which have been declared as having regional impact. He added that SNHPC went to the State House in an effort to get a bill sponsored to allow such a thing, but it was shot down. He stated regional impact, essentially, is an unfunded mandate.

Planning Commissions

Mr. Wood next asked what kinds of services each Town receives from their Planning Commission, as both Epping and Fremont are members of the Rockingham Planning Commission, whereas Candia and Raymond are members of Southern NH Planning Commission.

Ms. Lindsey of Candia noted they have a great working relationship with SNHPC.

Mr. Downing of Fremont noted that a circuit rider from Rockingham Planning Commission attends each meeting, but noted that they do need to pay for this service. Ms. Bolduc of Fremont stated she believes Fremont's annual dues are around \$9,300.

Mr. Morosco of Epping noted that Epping is fortunate to have a full-time Planner on staff. He added they use Rockingham Planning Commission for studies and information, mainly.

Local Issues

Mr. Wood next brought up the topic of local issues. He noted that the Mottolo site located off Blueberry Hill Road has become a problem over the last year. Mr. Wood explained that the plume of

pollution has been migrating into an area of a recent subdivision. He noted that the Environmental Protection Agency has stepped up and agreed to pay for the installation of a water line from the junction of Routes 102 and 107 to the Blueberry Hill Road area. He also discussed the Town's history of zoning being changed automatically to allow for an increased density once a lot becomes serviced by Town water. He stated as a result, the Planning Board needs to handle zoning in order to cut off the potential for massive amounts of unplanned residential growth. He reviewed the recent proposal of tiered zoning for a stretch along Route 102 with the group.

Ms. Matthews asked how Epping began re-zoning their Town. Mr. Morosco of Epping stated it was done in steps, adding that the process generally worked very well. He stated that the last step was to rezone the Route 27/101 area by the Speedway. He stated the warrant article for the proposal was very simply worded and succeeded in explaining what was being proposed. He stated there was not a lot of public input on the idea, and it was generally well received, as people felt the zoning change made good sense. He stated he felt that people recognized that commercial zoning would increase property values.

Ms. Lindsey of Candia noted that the Exit 3 development is moving forward. She noted it is a gas station and donut shop. She stated that the Town is holding the developer to strict architectural standards, which the Town recently adopted. Additionally, the Board is looking at the Candia Four Corners area in an effort to make the area more densely utilized. Lastly, Ms. Lindsey noted that Candia recently adopted new Excavation Regulations, and is currently revising its Master Plan.

Mr. Kent asked if Candia has an Economic Development Committee chartered with soliciting a certain type of business. Ms. Lindsey of Candia replied at one time such a group did exist, however she is not certain if they are still active.

Mr. Hoitt noted that the lane striping on Route 27 has changed last year in the vicinity of Liquid Planet Water Park. He asked if the State required the Park to pay for the restriping of the lanes. Mr. Lindsey of Candia replied she was unsure.

Ms. Bolduc of Fremont noted that the Town is continuously updating its Master Plan. Mr. Downing of Fremont stated they had a 27-home development that is being taken by the Town for back taxes. He added they also had a 112-unit elderly condominium development, but the units are not selling. He noted that a few developers in Fremont seem to have encountered money problems.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the viability of elderly housing developments. Mr. Morosco of Epping stated to him, it makes sense for visiting services (such as Meals on Wheels, or Visiting Nurses Associations) to be visible in these types of developments. He added perhaps making elderly developments into mixed-use developments where offices for these services can be co-located, could also be beneficial.

Ms. Bolduc of Fremont added at one time, a developer presented a plan that would draw elderly population to one area that would have a bank, hair salon, community center, etc. She noted that the developer ran into difficulties and the development never happened. She added that Fremont is in a different place than is Epping and Raymond as Fremont is essentially a bedroom community.

Ms. Matthews asked if the Town of Fremont has Floodplain Ordinance in place. Ms. Bolduc of Fremont replied yes, adding that there is a large aquifer under the Town. She noted that Fremont's zoning is three acres above the aquifer, and two acres elsewhere.

Mr. Hoitt noted that the Exit 4 development known as "Granite Meadows" has stalled, adding that the developer is currently undergoing sewage testing in Woodsville for a new type of treatment that does not exist in New Hampshire yet. He stated the economy has stalled new development.

Ms. Bolduc of Fremont noted that homes in Fremont still seem to be selling quite well, especially those that are smaller in size. She added she has seeing more activity lately amongst the trades-people (electricians, plumbers) in regards to pulling permits.

Mr. Wood noted in his line of work as an appraiser, he has seen an increase in refinancing of late.

Other Issues, Concerns, and Topics of Discussion

Mr. Morosco of Epping asked what Raymond is doing to address the Workforce Housing Legislation. Mr. Wood responded there is an assumption by many in Raymond that there is already an abundance of workforce housing available.

The question was raised as to how a town should calculate its fair share of workforce housing. Mr. Munn of SNHPC stated SNHPC hired Bruce Mayberry of BCM Planning, LLC this year to update their 2006 Housing Needs Assessment. He noted the end result is that SNHPC ended up using Rockingham Planning Commission's spreadsheet to conduct a fair share analysis for the entire SNHPC region. He specified that a town-by-town analysis was not conducted, adding each community has to perform this analysis on their own.

Mr. Munn added that the Town of Hooksett is currently being tested in Court regarding workforce housing. He explained that the Town is being sued by a developer for there not being an efficient way for him to develop workforce housing. He added that the Town does have a workforce housing ordinance in place, and that the Town feels they currently have a sufficient amount of workforce housing, and that it meets the fair share test.

Mr. Cartier Creveling noted that last year, Bruce Mayberry came before the Planning Board and suggested that the Board should proceed by eliminating limitations for opportunities for workforce housing developments, so that is what they started to do.

Mr. Morosco of Epping reviewed aspects of the workforce housing ordinance was crafted and passed in the Town of Epping.

Mr. Wood noted that one of Raymond's difficulties is that there are limited pockets of manufactured home zoning and multi-family home zoning.

Mr. Downing of Fremont stated many in Fremont feel the same as Raymond, that they will be ok in that there are a lot of rental units and manufactured homes. Ms. Bolduc of Fremont agreed, adding that the Town is still working on it, but overall feels like the fair share test will be met.

Mr. Wood noted that the Board met with officials from Keyspan and National Grid in the past regarding the feasibility of extending Natural Gas service to Raymond. He noted they were told it would cost

about \$20 million to extend gas from Hooksett, and about \$10 million to extend service from Exeter. The common theme was that a large user was needed in order to make such an extension economically viable for the gas company. Mr. Morosco of Epping expressed interest in this discussion, adding he would like to discuss this again at a future meeting between Towns.

Mr. Wood mentioned the current focus on the Exit 5 area, and the establishment of the Exit 5 Special Advisory Council. Mr. Cartier Creveling explained that the Council, comprised largely of business owners in the Exit 5 area, raised money for wastewater feasibility and location studies to be conducted. He added the Council just reviewed the cost estimates at their last meeting, and noted that they are looking at linking the treatment efforts for Exits 4 and 5.

Mr. Hoitt noted that Fisher Auto Parts recently purchased and renovated a building formerly occupied by Rehrig Pacific located behind Raymond Shopping Center. He added that Fisher Auto Parts has also expressed interest in possible expansion.

Mr. Cantwell asked if anyone uses incentives to attract specific businesses to their Towns. Mr. Morosco of Epping stated they lessen fees where possible, but a lot footwork and discussion has helped in attracting businesses. Mr. Kent asked who does the footwork and handshaking. Mr. Morosco replied that the Planning Board does. He added that Epping does not have an Economic Development Committee, but is blessed with forward-thinking planners and Board members.

Mr. Cantwell asked if there are any conflict of interest concerns with this approach. He offered an example of Board members approaching business X to try and have the business come to Town. Then, if they agree, they will have to come before the Board. Mr. Morosco of Epping stated he doesn't feel there is a concern, adding that developers are made aware that the Town will deal with them fairly, but still to the letter of the law.

Ms. Gott asked what happens when a developer says something to the effect of "but when we spoke before you promised me this, and it didn't seem like a problem then..." Mr. Morosco of Epping stated this type of issue has never occurred that he knows but, but added it may go to the Planner or Building Inspector instead. He stated it is very important for deals to be honest, real and communications to be open.

Mr. Kent stated the type of coaching being described is a good way to get developers to think outside the box. Mr. Morosco of Epping stated they try to focus certain developments in certain areas. He added that they have architectural standards that require commercial developments to meet certain point ratings.

Conclusions

Mr. Cartier Creveling asked if those in attendance felt this meeting was beneficial. Ms. Lindsey of Candia stated she feels it is important for committees and boards within a Town to talk, adding it never seems to happen enough. She stated she loves the idea of neighboring towns communicating, and felt this meeting was great.

Ms. Bolduc of Fremont stated each town has different goals and needs, and it is a great idea to get together and share successes and difficulties.

Mr. Cartier Creveling asked if those in attendance would like to attend a similar meeting in the future. Everyone in attendance supported the idea.

Mr. Cartier Creveling noted that over the past two years, Raymond has undertaken a lot of work on its Excavation Regulations, and learned a lot about excavations in general, including the State's process. He stated it might be beneficial to discuss this in the future. He stated he would also like to obtain a copy of Candia's and Epping's Architectural Standards, as Raymond has discussed crafting such standards in the past.

Other Business

Members Sitting for this Discussion: Jonathan Wood; Carolyn Matthews; Bill Hoitt; Bill Cantwell; Jim Kent; Gretchen Gott; Don Hedman.

No other business was discussed.

Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Cantwell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kent, to adjourn. The motion carried with a unanimous vote of 7-0-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Price
Planning Technician